

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-10

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R 061621Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 806

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 8321

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: DECEMBER 5-6 SYRIAN MEDIA STRESS EFFORTS BY SARKIS TO
OBTAIN AGREEMENT ON COLLECTION OF HEAVY WEAPONS

1. MEDIA FOCUSED ON EFFORTS TO COLLECT HEAVY WEAPONS IN
LEBAN AND FONMIN KHADDAM'S IMPROVING HEALTH FOLLOWING
RECENT ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. PRESS NOTED THAT QUADRIPARTITE
COMMITTEE HEADED BY PRES. SARKIS WILL MEET DEC. 6 TO SUPER-
VISE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARAB SUMMIT RESES. AL-BAATH CITED
BEIRUT AL-NAHAR ARTICLE ALLEGING THAT PRES. ASAD AND PLO
LEADER ARAFAT HAD REACHED AGREEMENT ON COLLECTION OF HEAVY
WEAPONS, STATUS OF PALESTINIAN CAMPS IN LEBANESE CITIES AND
WITHDRAWAL OF PALESTINIAN FORCES FROM NORTH LEBANON. PRESS
ALSO CLAIMED THAT ARAB AND FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS
IN BEIRUT PREPARING TO RESUME NORMAL ACTIVITY IN
LEBANESE CAPITAL. ACCORDING TO PRESS CITATION OF
BEIRUT RADIO BROADCAST, BEIRUT PORT WILL REOPEN BY
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DEC. 15.

2. PRESS REPORTED STATEMENT BY AL REP AL-KHOLI PUBLISHED IN LEBANESE WEEKLY ASSERTING THAT LEBANON CURRENTLY IN TRANSITION FROM FIGHTING STAGE TO PHASE OF PEACE.

3. MEDIA GAVE FAORABLE MENTION TO INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARY REGARDING PRES. ASAD'S INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH KRAFT. MEDIA HIGHLIGHTED REACTION PRAISING REMARKS THAT SYRIAN AIM IN LEBANON IS ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE AND THAT SYRIAN FORCES WILL IMPLEMENT ORDERS BY SARKIS TO MOVE TO SOUTH OR ANY OTHER LEBANESE DISTRICT.

4. MEDIA CONTINUE TO GIVE PROMINENT ATTENTION TO CABLES RECEIVED BY CONVALESCING FONMIN KHADDAM WISHING HIM QUICK RECOVERY FROM HIS WOUNDS.

5. DEC. 5 AL-BAATH EDITORIAL EMPHASIZED THAT "NO REAL AND DURABLE PEACE CAN EXIST WITHOUT WITHDRAWING HEAVY WEAPONS FROM ALL PARTIES TO LEBANESE DISPUTE." AL-BAATH DESCRIBED THIS AS PRIMARY DETERMINANT OF PARTIES' COMMITMENT TO ARAB SUMMIT RESES. EDITORIAL CONTINUED WITH WARNING THAT QUESTION OF WHO TURNS OVER ARMS FIRST WILL LEAD TO INTOLERABLE DEADLOCK, AND REMINDED READERS THAT ABILITY OF ADF TO UPHOLD SECURITY IS SUFFICIENT GUARANTEE TO BREAK CLIMATE OF MISTRUST GENERATED BY PREVIOUS FIGHTING: "ANY PARTY VIOLATING PEACE COMMITMENTS OR ATTEMPTING TO EXPLOIT SITUATION WILL BE CONDEMNED AND EFFECTIVELY RESTRAINED." DEC. 6 AL-BAATH OPINED THAT SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF HEAVY WEAPONS COLLECTION ISSUE WOULD OPEN DOOR TO NEW STAGE IN MARCH TOWARD PEACE, WHILE DELAY ON THIS ISSUE WILL IMPEDE PROGRESS TOWARD RECONCILIATION.

6. COMMENT: IT IS APPARENT FROM EDITORIAL COMMENTARY THAT SARG CONCERNED LEST UNDUE DELAY IN REACHING AGREEMENT AMONG ALL FACTIONS TO TURN OVER THEIR HEAVY WEAPONS WILL UNDERCUT MOMENTUM TOWARD PEACE ACHIEVED THROUGH SUCCESSFUL DEPLOYMENT OF ADF.

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